

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

5 ~~1. Apparatus for notifying a called-but-busy party of an incoming telephone call attempt over a telephone line while the called-but-busy party is accessing the Internet over the same telephone line, comprising:~~

~~an Internet communication module; and~~

~~a message formatter;~~

10 ~~wherein said Internet communication module is adapted to cause said message formatter to send a notification message to said called-but-busy party upon request from a remote telephone user.~~

15 ~~2. The apparatus for notifying a called-but-busy party of an incoming telephone call attempt over a telephone line while the called-but-busy party is accessing the Internet over the same telephone line according to claim 1, wherein:~~

~~said remote telephone user is a central office.~~

20 ~~3. The apparatus for notifying a called-but-busy party of an incoming telephone call attempt over a telephone line while the called-but-busy party is accessing the Internet over the same telephone line according to claim 1, wherein:~~

25 ~~said remote telephone user is a party trying to establish a telephone call with said called-but-busy party.~~

4. The apparatus for notifying a called-but-busy party of an incoming telephone call attempt over a telephone line while the called-but-busy party is accessing the Internet over the same telephone line according to claim 1, further comprising:

5 a call related information receiver;
 wherein call related information regarding a calling party is included with said notification message.

5. The apparatus for notifying a called-but-busy party of an incoming telephone call attempt over a telephone line while the called-but-busy party is accessing the Internet over the same telephone line according to claim 1, wherein:

 said call related information receiver is a Caller ID receiver.

6. The apparatus for notifying a called-but-busy party of an incoming telephone call attempt over a telephone line while the called-but-busy party is accessing the Internet over the same telephone line according to claim 1, further comprising:

 said notification message is a textual message.

7. The apparatus for notifying a called-but-busy party of an incoming telephone call attempt over a telephone line while the called-but-busy party is accessing the Internet over the same telephone line according to claim 6, wherein:

 said textual message is an e-mail message.

8. The apparatus for notifying a called-but-busy party of an incoming telephone call attempt over a telephone line while the called-but-busy party is accessing the Internet over the same telephone line according to claim 1, further comprising:

5 said notification message includes an audibly playable data file.

9. The apparatus for notifying a called-but-busy party of an incoming telephone call attempt over a telephone line while the called-but-busy party is accessing the Internet over the same telephone line according to claim 1, wherein:

 said audibly playable data file automatically plays when received on a computer terminal of said called-but-busy party.

10. The apparatus for notifying a called-but-busy party of an incoming telephone call attempt over a telephone line while the called-but-busy party is accessing the Internet over the same telephone line according to claim 1, further comprising:

15 a data signal detector adapted to detect likely Internet usage of said called-but-busy party.

11. The apparatus for notifying a called-but-busy party of an incoming telephone call attempt over a telephone line while the called-but-busy party is accessing the Internet over the same telephone line according to claim 10, wherein:

25 said notification message includes information regarding likely Internet usage of said called-but-busy party.

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12. A method for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user, comprising:

- 5 uniquely identifying an Internet user via a telephone call; and
notifying said uniquely identified user that said calling party is attempting to call said Internet user over said telephone line.

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10 13. The method for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user according to claim 12, further comprising:

receiving a notification request from said calling party.

15 14. The method for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user according to claim 12, further comprising:

receiving a notification request from a central office.

20 15. The method for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user according to claim 12, further comprising:

determining at a central office a likelihood that said Internet user is connected with said Internet.

25 16. The method for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user according to claim 12, wherein:

said notification is an e-mail message.

17. The method for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user according to claim 12, wherein:

said notification is an audibly playable message.

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18. A method for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user, comprising:

determining at a central office a likelihood that said Internet user is connected with said Internet; and
10 notifying an attempted calling party to said Internet user of said likelihood.

19. Apparatus for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user, comprising:

means for uniquely identifying an Internet user via a telephone call; and
means for notifying said uniquely identified user that said
20 calling party is attempting to call said Internet user over said telephone line.

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20. The apparatus for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user according to claim 19, further comprising:

means for receiving a notification request from said calling party.

21. The apparatus for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user according to claim 19, further comprising:

5 means for receiving a notification request from a central office.

22. The apparatus for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user according to claim 19, further comprising:

10 means for determining at a central office a likelihood that said Internet user is connected with said Internet.

23. The apparatus for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user according to claim 19, wherein:

15 said notification is an e-mail message.

24. The apparatus for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user according to claim 19, wherein:

20 said notification is an audibly playable message.

25 ~~25.~~ Apparatus for notifying an Internet user of a telephone line that a calling party is attempting to connect with said Internet user, comprising:

means for determining at a central office a likelihood that said Internet user is connected with said Internet; and

means for notifying an attempted calling party to said Internet user of said likelihood.